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Character of Isaiah.—Isaiah was self-evidently a man endowed with the noblest genius, with an inexhaustible wealth and brilliancy of imagination and fertility of thought. He had inherited the spirit and traditions of the Hebrew people in his life-blood. He was familiar with the events of Israel's past history, as is shown by his frequent allusions to such events as the calling of Abraham, the destruction of Sodom, the marching of Israel out of Egypt, the stretching out of Moses's rod over the sea, the discomfiture of the Canaanites in the valley of Gibeon, the cloud by day and the fire by night, etc.; and still more deeply was his spirit impregnated with the spirit of the nation, as called and inspired by God to be the people of righteousness, bearing the treasures of truth and salvation for the world. He shows himself accurately informed in the geography and politics of the countries around Palestine, even of Egypt and Assyria. His rich and vivid imagery shows wonderful familiarity with the scenery and flora and fauna of his own land. He was versed in the literature of the poets and prophets before him, as many quotations testify. But he did not derive his inspiration at second hand; his spirit had taken fire by personal contact with the Eternal Spirit of truth and righteousness, and burned with a perennial glow. No doubt he had vexed his righteous soul with the corruptions of his people even before, about the age of twenty, the death of Uzziah prompted his visit to the temple, where he saw, in a trance of meditation, the vision of God in the midst of the chanting seraphim, where, in the vision of the Thrice-Holy, the cry burst from his awed soul, "Woe is unto me! for I am undone. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips!" and his lips were touched with fire for his purification; where, in answer to the call, "Whom shall we send and who will go for us?" he had volunteered the answer, "Here am I, send me." From that hour he became the seer and mouthpiece of the Holy One, "filling the whole earth with his glory," and filling his own soul with its πληρωμα full and overflowing. One is impressed in reading him with the burning intensity of his sense of God's holy presence in him, and of his solemn charge as the bearer of the divine messages. His soul, in every faculty and feeling, quivers with thrills of spiritual life, and his words tingle with it. His thoughts become lightning-flashes of the celestial fire; his oracles thunder-peals of the voice of eternal righteousness. His own person, his marriage with the prophetess, the birth of his children and their symbolic names, become object-lessons of his prophetic utterances, as he says, "Behold I and the children which the Lord hath given me are for signs and portents from the Lord of Hosts who dwelleth in Zion."—*From Dunning's Recent Researches in Isaiah. The Independent.*

Chaldean Imprecations. [Among the Chaldeans] the formulæ of imprecations were really terrible. They called upon all the gods of heaven and of the abyss to display their power by overwhelming with misfortunes the person against whom they were directed. I shall quote as an example those upon the celebrated monument of our national library, which is known by the name of Caillou Michaux, after the traveler who brought it from the suburbs of Bagdad. It is an ovoid boulder of black basalt, fifty centimetres high, upon the lower part of which are sculptured some sacred symbols; the rest of the stone is covered with a long inscription in the Assyrian tongue, containing the law concerning landed property as a dowry for a woman on her marriage, and giving the whole measurement of the land to which the stone served as a boundary. After the copy of the act pas-

sed in an authentic manner, come the imprecations against any one who displaced the boundary, or troubled in any way the peaceable possessor of the lands.

They (the imprecations) shall precipitate this man into the water; they shall bury him in the ground; they shall cause him to be overwhelmed with stones; they shall burn him with fire; they shall drive him into exile into places where he cannot live.

May Anu, Bel, Nouah, and the Supreme Lady, the great gods, cover him with absolute confusion, may they root up his stability, may they efface his posterity!

May Marduk, the great lord, the eternal chief, fasten him up with unbreakable chains!

May the Sun, the great judge of heaven and earth, pronounce his condemnation, and take him in his snares!

May Sin, the illuminator, who inhabits the elevated regions, catch him in a net like a wild ram captured in the chase; like a buffalo whom he throws to the ground by taking him in a noose!

May Ishtar, queen of heaven and earth, strike him in the presence of gods and men, and entice his servants to perdition!

May Adar, the son of the zenith, the child of Bel, the supreme, destroy the limits and the boundary of his property!

May Gula, the great lady, the spouse of the winter Sun, pour inside him a deadly poison; may she cause his blood and sweat to flow like water!

May Bin, the captain of heaven and earth, the son of Anu, the hero, inundate his field!

May Serakh destroy the firstfruits of his harvest * * * may he enervate his animals!

May Nebo, the supreme intelligence overwhelm him with affliction and terror, and lastly may he hurry him into incurable despair!

And may all the great gods whose names are mentioned in this inscription curse him with a curse from which he can never be released! may they scatter his race until the end of time!—*From Lenormant's Chaldean Magic and Sorcery.*

➤CONTRIBUTED ✧ NOTES.◀

Maimonides's Creed.—And here is an appropriate place to mention that the fundamental doctrines of our religion are thirteen.

1. One must believe in the existence of a Creator, be he blessed, i. e., that the Existent is perfect in all his existence and is the cause of all things that exist, and that they derive their existence only from him. His non-existence is impossible, as without his existence nothing else can exist. But if even nothing besides him should exist, his existence can not cease. He alone, whose name be blessed, is *one* and *Lord* for he is all-perfect and all-sufficient, having no need of any other being; but all other beings, as angels, the spheres, and all which is therein, as also all that is beneath them, are depending on him. This first article is taught by the words, "I am the Lord thy God." (Exod. xx., 2.)

2. The Unity of God, whose name be blessed, we must believe: that the Cause of all is *one*, not like one of a pair, of a species, or like one man which can be divided into many, or like one body that can be divided into parts infinite, but that God is one like no other one. This second article is taught by the words, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi., 4.)

3. The immateriality of God we must believe, that this one is not matter, nor possesses any properties of matter, as motion and rest, either in essence or attributes. Therefore have our wise men divested him of composition and